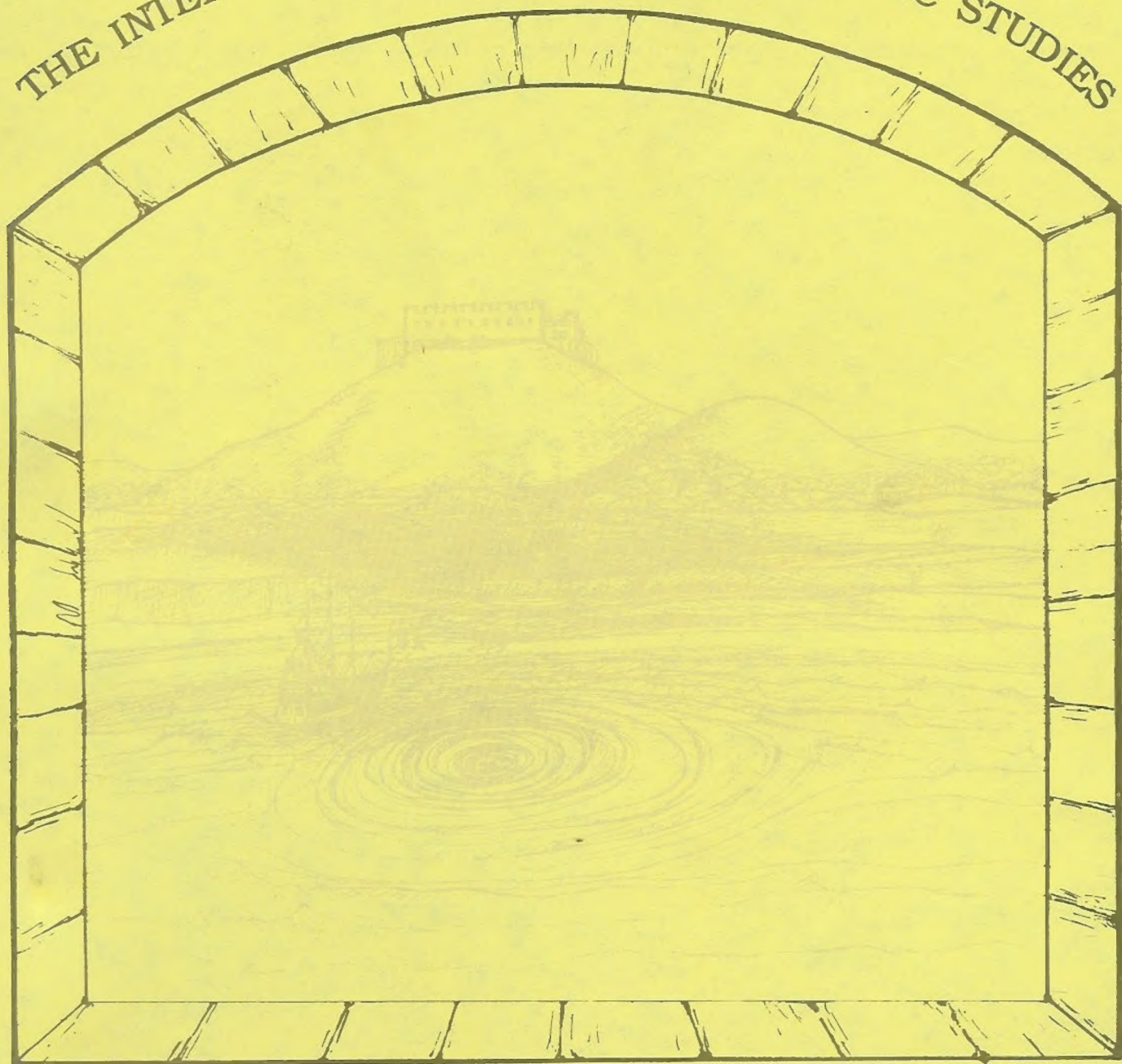


THE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF ESOTERIC STUDIES



PLANE III

LIBER⁵⁷ THUNDER !

GRADE: *COMPANION*

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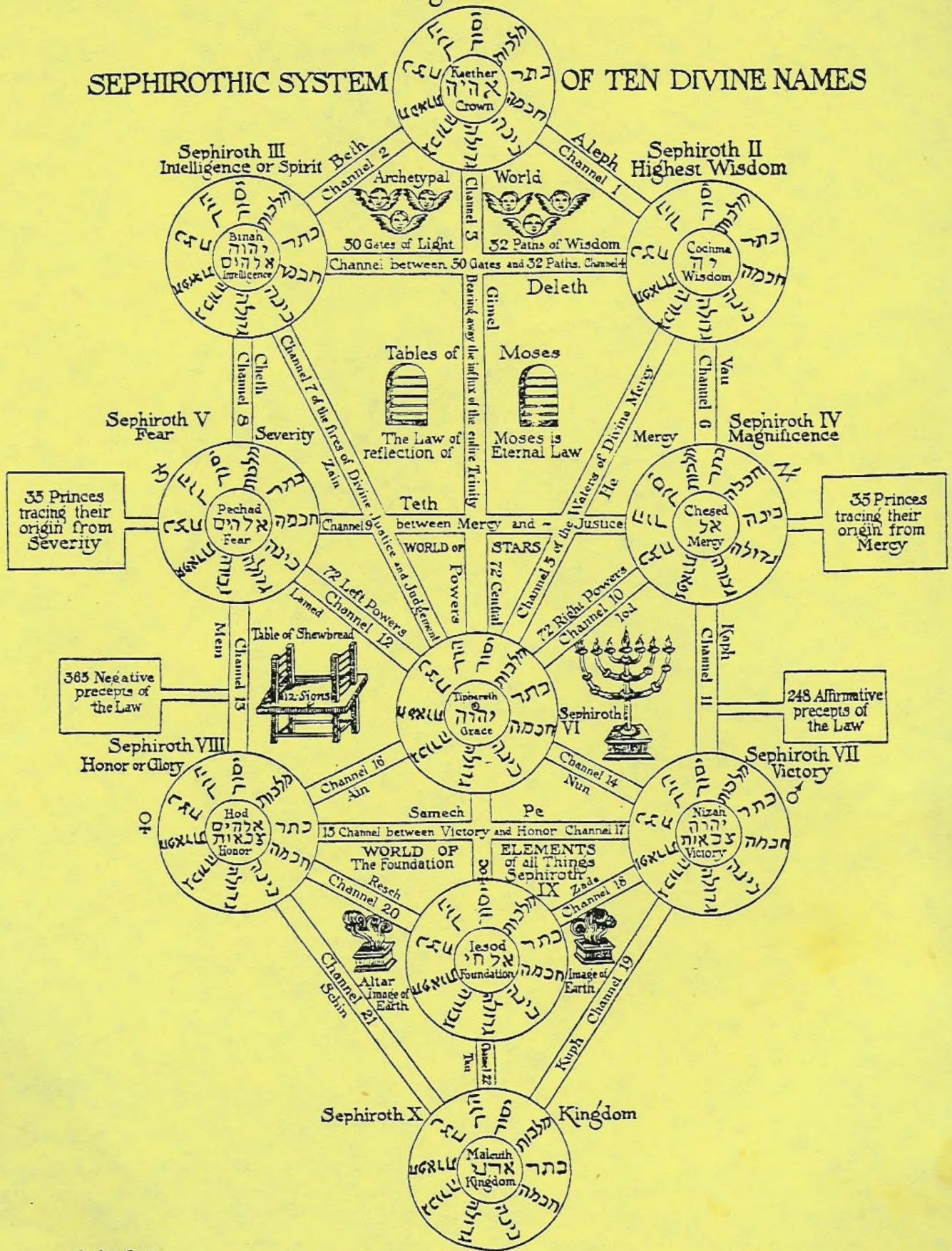
DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT AND MYSTICAL ENLIGHTENMENT OF MAN

HORIZON OF ETERNITY

Sephiroth First

Highest Crown

SEPHIROTHIC SYSTEM OF TEN DIVINE NAMES



57000



#214

Beloved and Respected Companions

ORDERS OF CHIVALRY IN MODERN TIMES

The modern descendants of the orders of chivalry have been unkindly described by their detractors as being either mild, benevolent charitable institutions, or mutual aid societies composed of people who enjoy titles and dressing up. Those who have taken it upon themselves to defend these orders claim that some of them have an esoteric side dedicated to the spiritual development of an elite who work quietly and without fanfare for the evolution of humanity. To their credit, the still-active traditional orders have remained discreet in the face of assertions made both by their detractors and their defenders.

The Order of the Knights of Malta, after many vicissitudes, exists today with headquarters in Rome. Sometime after his expulsion from Malta by Napoleon, von Hemptesch abdicated his position as Grand Master in favour of the Russian Tsar Paul I, and subsequently died in poverty in Montpellier, France, in 1803. After his abdication there followed a period of confusion during which the post of Grand Master was abolished.

In 1803 Pope Pius VII appointed Jean Tommasi as head of the Order. Throughout the nineteenth century the Knights of the Order pressed continually but without success to be given back the island of Malta. The headquarters of the Order was established in Rome in 1834 after the Russian Commanders of the Order were persuaded to give up their claims to primacy. During the period which followed there were continuous difficulties with the papacy. These were settled in 1961 when the Order adopted a new constitution.

Today* the Order of the Knights of Malta comprises some 9,000 members throughout the world. The activities of the Order are now essentially charitable and humanitarian. The Order has diplomatic relations with some 42 countries, mostly in Western Europe and Latin America (with the exception of the United Kingdom and the Scandinavian countries.)

Apart from a number of ecclesiastics, the membership of the Order is divided into three classes. Members of the first are known as Knights of Justice. These are members who have

*(1990)

taken vows of obedience, poverty and chastity, accepted particular rules and are subject to Canon Law. The second category are called Knights of Obedience. These are those who have formally undertaken to follow a Christian life according to the spirit of the Order. Finally there are those who have not given a formal undertaking but who have agreed to live a Christian life and to participate in the humanitarian activities of the Order.

Contrary to the Order of the Knights Templar, the Order of the Knights of Malta has never admitted to any esoteric activities. However, it is believed that at least one of the Grand Masters of the Knights of Malta, Manuel Pinto de Fonseca, was a high initiate of the Temple. The story goes that it was Pinto who initiated the famous Count Cagliostro into the Tradition of the temple.

As far as the Teutonic Knights are concerned, in 1809 Napoleon abolished the Order in all the countries of the Rhine Confederation. The Order continued however in Austria and its headquarters were transferred to Vienna. In 1840 communal living was established among the clergy and a female branch instituted. After a papal decision in 1929, the Order dropped its links with chivalry and returned to its original aims of promoting charitable activities largely in Austria, South Tyrol, West Germany and Yugoslavia. In 1938 the National Socialist Government abolished the Order. It was reinstated after the second World War, and now continues modestly in Germany as a religious community devoted to charity, teaching and good works.

As mentioned previously, towards the end of the Middle Ages kings and princes had begun the practice of creating secular orders with the purpose of forming elite groups bound to the royal person. These orders had nothing in common with the old institution of chivalry except for titles, the act of dubbing and the awarding of insignias. A few of these honorary orders have survived into modern times.

In some countries, particularly in the United States of America, there are many fraternal organizations of a social, benevolent character which describe themselves as orders of knighthood, but which do not have or claim to have links with the tradition of chivalry.

As far as the Order of the Knights Templar is concerned, from time to time various orders have sprung up, especially in France, all claiming direct lineage from the original Order founded by Hughes de Payns. Today in France there are all kinds of orders, some pure in intention, some less so, and others quite ridiculous in their pretensions. Not infrequently, many of these orders, instead of getting on with the job in hand, spend a great deal of time and energy deriding other orders whom they consider to have a lesser claim to

legitimacy. It is not my purpose to discredit any particular order. I believe in the old biblical admonition, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

That being said, for those persons seeking a Templar order today, the choice is not an easy one. No matter which order is chosen one is bound to hear tales originating in other orders of some kind of unethical behaviour by those in charge of the order of one's choice. There are some orders in which the officers in charge are administratively and intellectually capable, but lack the spiritual radiation which can transform the spiritual lives of members in concrete ways. There are others whose leaders are honourable but continue to adhere rigidly to procedures and practices drawn from the Middle Ages. In this kind of situation what often happens is that dynamic members continuously leave, taking whatever little spirit there is, leaving the letter and the form to a few moribund chiefs who would probably die of shock if anything else happened. There are also situations where orders are run by individuals whose personal lives do not seem to correspond to the lofty ideals they preach. Sometimes a very capable and inspired leader arrives on the scene and is given control by a grateful membership only to find that he and the order are never allowed by other orders to live down the misdeeds or shortcomings of his predecessor.

Against this background the picture for aspirants, particularly in continental Europe, where orders abound, might not seem a very inspiring one. In practice the situation is not as bad as it appears. One thing the aspirant should realize is that one of the first tests he will encounter on the path to spiritual development is that of discernment or discrimination.

In the English-speaking world, where there are few if any operative Templar orders, the situation is much easier. The main reason for the scarcity of Templar orders has quite simply been the question of language. Nearly all existing Templar Orders originate in France. Even where branches exist in countries outside France, the senior members of the local branches must be able to communicate with headquarters in French. Although in some ways this has been a blessing, in the sense that non-European seekers have been largely spared the growing pains of the Templar revival, it is at the same time a pity that the immense body of spiritual knowledge available to the Templar Tradition is not yet accessible to the English-speaking (and other) regions of the world.

The difficulty caused by the language barrier has likewise plagued the growth of the Martinist Order in English-speaking countries; happily however, since 1985, this situation has been addressed and the problem is slowly being overcome.

I will now give a brief summary covering those contributors who I feel have had a predominant influence on the

Western Tradition. It follows that there are many groups, movements and individuals both in the past as well as in modern times which time and space does not allow me to mention, but which have also played their roles in adding to our experience of humanity's long quest for the Grail. To cite one: the Theosophical Society, since I feel their inspiration more properly belongs to the Oriental Tradition.

It will be seen that some of the strands we will examine have co-existed with the Templars, and from all indications have contributed to the spiritual knowledge gathered by that Order. In turn, a number of the strands have themselves been directly or indirectly enriched by the Order.

I will begin with the Kabalists.

THE ESOTERIC TRADITION AND THE TEMPLE

THE KABALISTS

In this introduction I will briefly recap some of what you have already been taught, and also step forward on some new ground, all of which will be in preparation of things to come. The word Kabbalah, also written Qabbala or Cabala, as you know, is of Hebrew origin. It has been translated as "to receive" but means literally "the tradition". As the combination of these two ideas suggest, the Kabbalah has been essentially an oral tradition within which the secrets of Jewish mysticism are passed on through initiation into teachings and practice under a guide experienced in the system. The Kabbalah is described as a tradition in the sense that it claims to represent the esoteric part of the oral Torah revealed to Moses. In fact Kabbalism includes the entire range of esoteric doctrine and practice which had arisen during the first and second centuries of the Christian era and developed particularly from AD 1200 onwards.

In the period between the third and sixth centuries, a work appeared which came to be known as the **Sepher Yetzirah** or **Book of Creation**. Perhaps you have obtained a copy. This is the earliest text of speculative Jewish mysticism, and it describes the process of creation in terms of 10 primordial emanations called **Sephiroth**. The work links the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet to the 10 **Sephiroth** to form symbolic keys to a comprehensive philosophical system called the 32 Secret Paths of Wisdom.

Dissatisfied with the traditional interpretation of Judaism, certain Kabalists rebelled against the excessive rationalism of the Jewish philosophers. They began to create a new dimension of religious experience in the thirteenth century. This was a decisive period in the development of the kabbalah and

was due to the work of the Jewish mystics or Provence in France during the second half of the twelfth century, and in Spain, especially in the region of Gerona, during the first half of the thirteenth century.

In the last quarter of the thirteenth century, the many strands of kabalism merged in a work which made its appearance under the title **Zohar** or **Book of Splendour**. The exact origin of the book is obscure, and there is controversy as to whether it was the rediscovered work of Simeon ben Yohai, a famous second century teacher, or a fourteenth century compilation by Moses de León from Guadalajara in Spain.

In the fourteenth century Joseph Gikatila wrote The Gates of Light, which further developed the doctrine of the **Zohar** by linking the Divine Names of God to the individual Sephiroth. The expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 led to a revival of interest in the mysticism of the kabbalah. This revival was concentrated in the little known town of Safed situated in Upper Galilee in that part of Palestine which is now Israel. Some of the famous names associated with this revival were those of Moses Cordovero and Isaac Luria. The last-mentioned made an important contribution to Kabbalistic philosophy. His influence was very strong in seventeenth and eighteenth century Jewish history, and he is considered to have indirectly prepared the ground for that popular form of Jewish mysticism which developed among the eighteenth century Jews of Eastern Europe known as Hasidism.

Since the last half of the nineteenth century, Kabbalistic teachings, especially the practical aspects, were modernized by a number of practitioners, including W. Wynn Westcott and S. L. MacGregor Mathers in the late 1800s, and Arthur Edward Waite, Aleister Crowley, Dion Fortune (Violet Firth), and Israel Regardie in the early part of the 1900s. In the 1960s, W. A. Butler continued the work of his modern predecessors of adopting and popularizing the Kabbalah. Some Kabbalists active in the 1980s include Gareth Knight, W. E. Gray and Z'ev Ben Shimon Halevi.

Let us refresh our minds. According to Kabbalists, the Supreme Being, which is an Absolute and inscrutable Unity, contains all within Him. This Unity is **Ain Soph**, meaning the Infinite One, the inherent creative principle. Such a lofty being, say the Kabbalists, could not create directly since it had no finite qualities. It therefore created indirectly by means of a series of 10 spheres from within the Infinite Light itself. These 10 emanations are called **Sephiroth** or **Splendors of the Infinite One**. The creative principle descends from **Kether**, the first created **Sephirah** (singular of Sephiroth), following a serpent-like path down through a series of Sephiroth arranged in triads. Each Sephirah manifests progressive states of destiny until the lowest sephirah, **Malkuth** or physical life, is reached.

The disposition of the 10 Sephiroth in a particular pattern linked by 22 paths is called **Otz Chiim** or the Tree of Life. According to the Kābalists the same arrangement exists in miniature within man's psycho-spiritual organism.

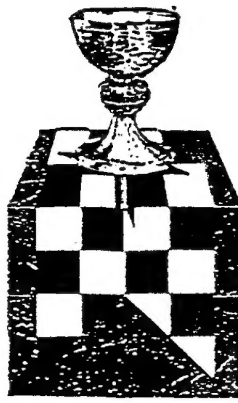
Historical accounts of the development of Kabbalism have now given much information on what is generally called the Practical Kabbalah. In the beginning, this aspect was kept secret and only transmitted orally, but over the centuries information on practical Kabbalistic techniques was gradually leaked, and when the secret teachings of the Order of the Golden Dawn (which we will review shortly) were published in the late 1930's, the practical Kabbalah became public knowledge.

In brief, the practical Kabbalah teaches that the 10 spheres of Sephiroth and the 22 connecting paths, which together form the Tree of Life, are a symbolic system of relationships which can be manipulated either subjectively or objectively using certain techniques. For example, using the tree subjectively, one can, by dynamizing and manipulating the corresponding centers within oneself, become in resonance or harmony with the forces of the Cosmos, i. e. with the different aspects of God symbolized by the different Sephiroth. This would bring about a kind of psycho-spiritual integration or illumination.

The Kabbalists teach that the Tree can also be used objectively. By this they mean that initiates of the system can, through the use of rituals based on Kabbalistic symbols and relationships, manipulate cosmic forces which can also affect the external life of the practitioner, including persons and events. Of course they also teach that if the powers obtained in this way are not used altruistically, Nature will exact drastic payment for the selfish abuse of such forces.

It is certain that the Knights Templar obtained access to Kabbalistic teachings. As was the case with Islamic Sufism, the rise of the Templars coincided with the development of Judaic Kabbalism. The spiritual esotericism of both Islam and Judaism were united with that of Christianity through the Templars, who were the *de facto* spiritual heirs of the early Church Fathers.

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#215

Beloved Companions and Seekers of the Grail!

THE QUEST OF THE HOLY GRAIL

Lecture Four : The Meaning of the Quest

"Nel Mezzo del cammin di nostra vita..." Dante begins.

"When I had journeyed half of our life's way I found myself within a shadowed forest, for I had lost the path that does not stray. Ah, it is hard to speak of what it was, that savage forest, dense and difficult, which even in recall renews my fear: so bitter -- death is hardly more severe!"

And, of course, for Dante the way out of the forest of lost direction is an interior way leading through the heart of the earth, and beyond that to the Mount of Purgation and the way that leads among the stars. (Compare the V.I.T.R.I.O.L. -- visit the interior of the earth and, by rectification, reveal the hidden stone -- of the alchemists).

In any case as we read in Dante's forest, or of the situation of the Grail, we should have, if we are reading with spiritual sensitivity, that odd experience -- like that of the boy Balthazar who discovers, in Ende's Neverending Story, that he is himself a character in the book he is reading -- that we are reading the story of our own life.

If in the Grail story the inner kingdom is separated from the outer, Logres from Britain, and the Grail is lost to the Table of Logres, and the ruler of the inner land is himself sick with a suffering which shadows his land, it is also true -- as we must now realize if we are to proceed -- *that our inner life is separated from our outer and both lie under the shadow of this separation.* If the Grail stories tell of Broceliande, the Forest Sauvage, through which one must pass -- and in which, as in Dante's "shadowed forest", no way is clear, -- so also we all know, or have known or will know, the experience of having lost our way in life and of seeing the world around us as, perhaps, a forest of symbols to which we have no key of interpretation.

"Jesus said unto them,

"When you make the two one,
and when you make the inner as the outer
and the outer as the inner
and the upper as the lower,
then you shall enter the Kingdom"

Thomas : 22

In these words the Lord defines an inner journey which precisely reflects the knight's goal of restoring the land of Logres and attaining the vision of the Grail. (Let us note parenthetically that the Gospel of Thomas, which was one of the texts found at Nag Hammadi, while not included in the New Testament, contains [and is perhaps the source of] many verses that are in the Four Gospels, and therefore is at an entirely higher degree of reliability, in relation to what Jesus actually said, than are the other apocryphal gospels, which seem to be speculative and written much later.)

Jesus said "Be wanderers." Thomas : 42

A quest is a journey in which the inner and outer worlds are brought together and organized around a goal. If we know a little Kabbalah we are acquainted with the doctrine of the "four worlds" and are aware that the significance of things changes as they are perceived at different levels. At the level, or world of Assiah (our physical world), *only actions may be seen, not causes*, and so the philosophy of materialism may be said to accurately describe the world from the point of view of Assiah. This is the shadowed forest where one sees no connections between things — and the way is lost.

"The lower the individual's spiritual attainment, the more divided one feels from the rest of existence... The Kabbalists stress, however, that as we begin to achieve higher states of awareness, we will increasingly see the unity among the apparently haphazard events around us."

Hoffman, The Way of Splendor

The role of the symbols of the quest is, then, that they serve as the framework around which one can reorganize one's perception of the world.

For the Chinese an object of quest was the hidden palace of Hsi Wang Mu which was located somewhere beyond the northern and western mountains beside the "Lake of Gems". This quest is still further developed by the Tibetans as the quest for the hidden land of Shambhala. At the center of this land in a park are reserved the supreme mandalas of the Kalacakra and it is said of these mystic patterns that "just seeing them bestows the supreme attainment."

Therefore the devotee organizes his life around the journey to Shambhala which it is said can be accomplished in three ways: Geographically, which is said to be the hardest. (Though there are many guidebooks, they were not [as might be expected] entirely clear.) (2) By Meditation or, as it were, astral projection; or finally (3) by dreams of the hidden kingdom.

If Shambhala is visualized as a hidden kingdom in Central Asia, it also represents a hidden region of the mind. As Edwin Bernbaum says

"We have lost the innocence that enabled us to see the world directly ... We have to go forward to a new and wiser innocence that combines the wonder of a child with the wisdom of a sage. Our interpretation of the guidebooks to Shambhala suggests that we can do this by living our lives as journeys toward a deeper awareness of ourselves and the world around us..."

A more literary form of the quest is the description, in The Conference of the Birds by the Sufi poet Farid ud-Din Attar, of the spiritual life as a journey across seven symbolic valleys in search of a king known as the Simurgh.

Now the Grail Quest is in one way completely unique and in another way it is similar to all the other spiritual quests. The similarity lies in that, as with the other quests, the follower of the way is, by his concentration on the object of the quest and its symbols, freed from the mundane world of dead materialism, and brought into a higher experience of the world where he can begin to see the connectedness of things and the operation of Providence. In the Grail stories there appears on page after page the word "adventure" which represents this experience.

"Perceval thou hast conquered ... enter this ship and go wheresoever adventure leads thee..."

"My sons, depart from here and go where adventure leads you..."

As P. M. Matarasso puts it, "in a general way adventure represents the random unpredictable element in life. To this the Quest adds a further dimension ... the adventure is above all God working and manifesting Himself in the physical world ... there runs through the stories like an unbroken thread the idea of providential guidance which man can either accept, refuse, or simply fail to see." The Perlesvaus takes this concept so far as to say that when a questing knight has passed through an area, and experienced the adventures it has to offer, the land itself -- its topography, castles, dangers and so on -- is changed so that at his return the knight will find it different

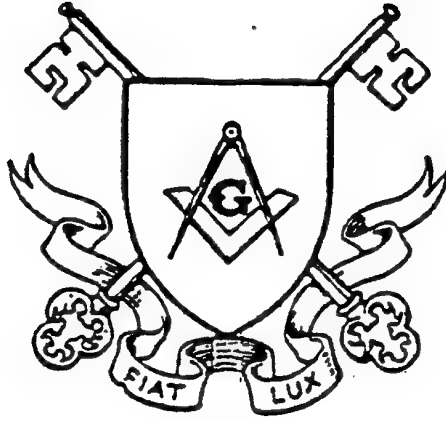
and providing different adventures. And it may be said, in general, that as we stop living on the surface of reality, and begin to see the possibility of "adventure", we find more and more the appearance of meaningful pattern and coincidence marking the way. On the other hand, of course, one may fall below mundane reality, as it were, into the paranoid's world of negative connection — a diminished, rather than enhanced reality. It is perhaps symptomatic of our times that this falling away from reality is generally accepted as an object of study, while the raising to a higher organization of reality is ignored or dismissed — however it is with this that we are concerned. In many of the Grail stories an asking of a question is crucial, as we shall see, to the achievement of the quest. John Matthews relates that nicely to the condition of everyone in this way,

"Thus a great part of the task for the Grail Seeker is to look within at the reality behind the world of appearance and to bring that reality out into the open. Thus as when the question is asked by the seekers and the wounds of king and land are healed, we must be able to stand in the Waste Land and question what we appear to see — the words 'quest' and 'question' are here synonymous."

And we may also add that the movement upward towards the roots of the worlds brings us to the place where we can participate in the healing of things, as the Grail stories show. So Rabbi Luzzato says, "the Highest Wisdom perceives and knows what is best to rectify all creation," and the Kabbalists regard that their meditation on "unification" helps to knit together the worlds. And of course there is similar teaching in the Martinist tradition and, indeed, in the general Christian tradition.

Thus far, we repeat, -the Grail Quest is similar, or at least analogous, to other spiritual quests. Where it is unique is that it is not just a story, or inspiring myth, but is rooted in the overwhelming reality of the Eucharist as we showed and shall later develop further. In this reality is not only the promise but also the achievement of the inner and outer worlds, of that which is above and that which is below. All quest stories, whatsoever, tend towards this one thing, this Grail, which was also an actual cup on an actual table. The Grail story, then, is the central quest of all because it is true on all levels of reality from the most subtle to the most dense.

However, before following deeper into these considerations, we shall return to the Grail stories and meet their central characters.



#216

RAISING

The Esoterism of Masonic Resurrection

"Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"

—1 Cor. 15:35.



THE moment when a Master Mason is raised is, perhaps, one of the supremest moments in his whole mortal life experience. Tho he may receive initiation into many cults and crafts, none of them compel the same mental response and reaction as the ceremony thru which every Freemason must pass ere he can take his place with his fellow craftsmen as an equal in every sense of the word.

2 Raising or elevating, bringing forth, stepping up, resurrecting or lifting, in some form or other, has formed the principal motif in every religion and philosophy the world has ever known, barring none. Back in ancient Egypt, the wonderful "Chapter of the Coming Forth by Day" in the Book of the Dead, is replete with the various applications of this great principle to individual and even collective human life.

3 All the arcane bodies of antiquity, justly famous, which have never been replaced by any of the ingeniously devised modern cults, many of which claim a silly antiquity they cannot substantiate, had, as their chief climax, the raising of the Candidate from simulated, and sometimes almost real death.

4 The whole structure of the Christian faith is built, not so much upon the life, work and activities of Jesus, the Christ, as upon the promise held out and the hope fortified, of life beyond the grave, a belief held by every race the world has known, and this is true regardless of how widely separated many races have been, especially in bygone centuries when the transmission of news and teachings of any sort were matters of slow and laborious exploration and long distance travel.

5 In view of its ethical foundation, we would be justified in expecting to find in the Masonic curriculum, something by way of a principle that would give added strength to a concept so universal in its scope as to know neither time, place or source of origin amongst all the world's humanity. We should

find this principle regardless of what we *do* know about the slow processes by which the ultimate idea became crystallized into an universal human belief, for which men were *ready* to die; which *made* them ready to die and to die happily.

6 Masonry *does* provide such a reinforcement of the general idea, divested of any and all trappings of doctrine or dogma. The ceremony of raising may be conducted by a group of officers in evening clothes or, by a working cast in full costume, supposedly of the time of the building of King Solomon's Temple. It makes little difference, except in its appeal to the æsthetic polarities demonstrated as between Lodges which delight in plain, well rendered simple work, and those which seek to develop ultra ritualism.

7 One of the symbolic names for the Great Pyramid was "The House (or Mountain) of Light". Herodotus seems to have known something of the rites which were celebrated in that historic structure, a structure, some cultists claim, that was erected a matter of over two hundred thousand years ago, but it is only fair to state that there is nothing in history, nothing in geological or archaeological science, and nothing in human reason to support such an hypothesis. Probably erected somewhat later than 2170 B. C., the King's Chamber or *Sanctum Sanctorum* was the scene of many a mystic drama. There is reason to believe, however, that the actual raising or restoration to consciousness took place in the Temple of the Sphinx, which was connected with the Great Pyramid. The body of the Sphinx is that of a lion, and the *Lion's Paw* figured symbolically in imparting strength to the Candidate so close to the borderline of life.

8 Restored to consciousness, the final bringing to Light took place in the Great Pyramid itself, the House of Light, into which no ray of sunlight ever penetrated after the completion of the mighty structure. Ceremonial or symbolic raising must convey the idea of an elevation unto a spiritual plane of life and consciousness exterior to the physical. While the Great Pyramid is, of course, upon the earth, the King's Chamber is elevated far above the earth's surface and the Candidate, seeing no ray of sun, but only such symbolic light as was devised at the time, was enabled to focus his consciousness, newly awakened, on a spiritual plane most cunningly yet aptly contrived.

9 In essentials, the process of raising a brother to all the Light that can be conferred upon him in any human undertaking or school of initiation, preserves the landmarks of spiritual truth and esoteric value entrusted by the now extinct Schools of the Lesser Mysteries of antiquity. The great and salient feature of the process of raising was, however, developed chiefly by the Alchemists, who applied the Principle involved, not alone to the raising of the human spirit, but to the raising of many lower states of vibration to higher ones in all the kingdoms antecedent to the human.

10 Thus, the esoteric value of the ceremony of raising consists and inheres in its more truly spiritual and occult (or hidden) character of TRANSMUTATION. When death occurs, *life does not and cannot end*. Having had no beginning an ending is inconceivable. Death, as far as finality means, is simply the end of a given *form*, or set of forms. The life Principle is even more active than ever. It is *free*, and in its free state, it is invisible to physical sensoria. It becomes tangible only when we become sensible of its presence thru contact with it in an instrument thru which it can function.

11 We cannot *see* electricity. But by establishing contact with it, we become instantaneously sensible of its presence tho still we cannot see it. A huge dynamo may be revolving at a terrific speed and developing potential power, but that power does not become appreciable in any way unless and until we make a demand upon it by establishing contact with it in circuit with it. Then the potential energy developed gets to work busily.

12 Religion and philosophy are quite right in basing their chiefest visions upon the principle of raising. Philosophy seeks ever to raise the human mind and understanding to higher levels of comprehension. Religion seeks to raise the human spirit from hopeless crystallization into material concepts and from a dull, sodden, hopeless status to a bright, happy, optimistic outlook thru a clear realization that life is eternal and that therefore, whatsoever we do today, is worth while because it is a part of the eternal plan so

far as we individually are concerned. So, *everything counts*. Everything in life becomes of supreme importance, for an eternal happiness is due us only as we earn it by conscious, well directed effort in the here and now.

13 Our wonderful progress in the present century is due, solely to the fact that, after centuries of ignorance, man discovered the way to raise iron from its softer status to the hardness and temper of steel. This is consequently the Age of Steel. It has raised or stepped up our culture a thousand-fold.

14 Masonry, following out the plan of the ages as expressed thru religion and philosophy, continues to stress the importance of the process of raising, with the result that, by keeping this momentous principle ever uppermost in the minds of its sons, the Craft has undoubtedly led in bringing the human mind to its present status of culture, wherein it is penetrating matter, space, time, dimension and cosmos as never before in human history. Why and how? Simply because, as the human mind is raised continually to higher and higher levels, it entertains higher concepts, which, thru study and concentrated purpose, must eventually find their ways into tangible expression.

15 Over sixty-five per cent of the principles we were formerly, and not so many years ago at that, required to *accept on faith*, we now *know to be fact*. As the human mind has been stepped up, year by year, it has reached out into the unseen, and many seeming mysteries of antiquity are the child's play of the laboratory today. In other words, we are undergoing, mentally and physically, a process of continuous transmutation. Our physical bodies are far more sensitive today than were those of our progenitors. That is one reason for the seeming multiplicity of new diseases, yet even in this matter, we are discovering that Mind is a comparatively all potent principle in healing that is fast superseding, in many instances, the healing mission of the *materia medica*.

16 It is true, of course, that the church also has taught the principle of raising, but it has taught and enforced it doctrinally and dogmatically in a way that has caused reason to revolt and common sense to question the authority of its teacher, usually ending up by showing the teacher the "better way." Freemasonry has stressed the principle of raising or transmutation, without doctrine or dogma, in a simple manner that has made and continues to make, regardless of his cultural status, a most powerful impression of lasting nature upon the mind of the candidate.

17 At this writing, we are not concerned with the particular manner in which the various candidates interpret the Masonic ceremony individually; the point is, that the continuous emphasis Masonry puts upon the principle of advancing to a higher spiritual level of consciousness is absolutely certain to have its effect, an effect that is equally certain to "work out" or manifest externally in the world's affairs in a constructive way.

18 The man who is continually seeking to attain higher phases or planes of consciousness is bound to reflect his mental attitude in his works in some way or other. The mind that soars, will achieve things pertaining to the higher plane and then seek to objectify them on the plane of his sensible environment. The world progresses and is vastly better because of the increasing group of those who *do* seek the higher things,—the "more excellent way"—the "things that are excellent."

19 As we look over the not formidable list of those who have become really great actors do we realize what it is that has made them great? It is not the donning of the costumes and the names of illustrious personages whom they have temporarily represented and portrayed. It has been due to their individual ability to put themselves into the actual character and individuality of the personages they represented. *They* were those personages temporarily, and in becoming, for a brief space only, the illustrious ones of earth, they rose to the occasion so fully that they took on, as by induction, the nature, character and merits of such personages. They lived the lives of the illustrious ones over again for them.

20 At a certain time in his career, every Mason has a similar opportunity. To the extent that he can grasp the solemnity and importance of the situation and rise to the opportunity presented, he derives a fleeting illumination

that cannot fail to make its permanent impress upon his inner consciousness. This furnishes a stimulus, brief we admit, but powerful enough to start him upon a new pathway thru life, and, to his credit be it said, that the average Mason *does* rise to this opportunity in *some* degree, as witness the ever-increasing strength and importance Freemasonry is assuming in the world of human affairs. Example is now powerful. Example is doubly powerful when the neofite enacts that which it represents in his personal and individual sphere.

21 The Three Great Ones, whom the Masonic neofite has for an example and whom he is called upon to exemplify, represent respectively, Wisdom, Art and Craft. These three factors united, produce what we call culture or civilization, and the degree of unity effected between them is the measure of the culture or civilization attained. Freemasonry, it may be seen from this, is a powerful factor and leverage for cultural attainment and its influence as a civilizing factor, standing pre-eminently for education, patronage of applied art, and the encouragement of craftsmanship thru wise principles, has been ever apparent in the entire course of its brilliant history.

22 The Masonic neofite gives the attentive ear to a dissertation on *sight*, and learns something of an All-Seeing Eye. This symbol is one of the many that have been appropriated by several modern fraternal and beneficiary orders without, however, the slightest reference in their rituals to the real meaning of them. The All-Seeing Eye is usually assumed to represent the omnipresent and transcending vision of Deity and ritualism refers to it accordingly. But there is much more to the symbol of the Eye. The All-Seeing Eye does represent the ever-present vision of Deity but it also represents the ever-present visualization of the All-Seeing Eye within each human being.

23 In every human individual, situate in the brain, between the caudad ends of the *thalami*, and occupying the depression between the two superior quadrigeminal bodies, is a tiny body about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter. It is called the Pineal Body or Gland, one of the most important of the endocrines. It is reddish in color and is connected with the Third Ventricle, projecting downwards between the *Superior Corpora Quadrigemina*, which are the centers of sight. It is covered by the *velum interpositum*, which intervenes between it and the *splenium* of the *corpus callosum*.

24 The Pineal Gland (shaped like a fir cone—*pinus*), has long been regarded by anatomists as a vestigial organ or rudimentary relic. It represents a cyclopean eye, and is assumed to be an atavism from some extinct ancestral vertebrate, homologous with the parietal organ, and resembling a molluscan eye of a living species of Prosaurian. Now, while the pineal eye has been found to be, instead of an atavism, a most important gland of secretion, with marvelous effects upon the human organism at certain periods of its career, it is, without actually being an active eye in the physical sense, a true eye to all intents and purposes, but functioning on the inner, rather than the outer planes.

25 Scientifically speaking, the pineal undoubtedly occupied a position up front, where it could exercise its properties of vision externally, but with the gradually changing conformation of the developing human skull, it has receded anatomically to its present position. But it still has the powers of vision, if the individual takes the pains to develop the consciousness of them. They are *there* and they are *operative* but we do not know or recognize them except thru fleeting visions we call hunches, intuitions, hallucinations of a kind and similar psychical phenomena.

26 The pineal gland is truly, in the light of recent discovery, a third eye. It is truly an All-Seeing Eye in each human individual who takes the trouble to develop requisite spiritual powers of a phase of vision that transcends ordinary physical eyesight. This "third eye" or organ of vision, located in the depths of the human brain, is the All-Seeing Eye that serves the Faithful Watcher who never slumbers or sleeps but who is ever active on the spiritual planes of being, the Ego. As the Ego is an Emanation, a "spark" from the Divine, the organ that serves it is not too distantly related to the All-Seeing Eye of Deity itself. Therefore, when we hear the dissertations on sight and the All-Seeing Eye in the Lodge, we may remind ourselves that it is not necessarily an eye somewhere "up in the clouds" that is watching over us.

It is an Eye, Divine in its essential attributes, that is watching over us right from within ourselves, where we are told by the sages to look for the Treasure of Treasures, and not elsewhere without us.

27 Almost co-eval with the idea of immortality itself, has been the concept of an All-Seeing Eye. The Hindus knew it as the Eye of Siva. The Tibetans have the Buddha of the Thousand Eyes. Ages before either of them, the Egyptians had the Tearful Eye of Isis, found so frequently upon the tombs and the various bas-reliefs. The symbol has been worked into Christian usage and Masonry has perpetuated the idea. But always, it has been the notion of an Eye observing humanity from without, and we now know that that is the wrong direction to look, for the truly spiritual must be sought by man *within himself*. The Great Light teaches us that the Kingdom of God and of Heaven is—not up in the air—but *within* us. God Himself is *within* us—not elsewhere—for “In Him we Live and Move and Have Our Being.” Therefore, as we exist only in and thru Him, He also must inhere in every atom or proton of our structure.

28 Under the symbol of a letter of the alphabet prominently displayed, the Mason contemplates the name of Deity. Like all the symbols of the Craft, however, it means more than simply the name of God. God is the contraction of Good. God expresses all good; evil, so-called, being the polarity of good that expresses misdirected energy. Electricity, perfectly good in its nature and character, can be powerfully constructive when properly directed. It can be equally destructive when misdirected. So, in order to distinguish between the two polarities, the Mason contemplates Deity as the Great Geometrician, by which name he seeks to comprehend the Deific attributes and activities as those of constructivity, for order is always constructive and geometry is a synonym for order.

29 It was in his capacity as the Great Geometrician, that Deity brot order out of chaos and gave us a world in which we see exemplified the continuous and unvarying conformity to natural law which is really Deity in Manifestation. God geometrizes. That is, He always plans each law in such a manner and on such a basis that all subsequent involutionary or evolutionary process will act in steady and obedient conformity with and to it. For this reason, a planet a moment off time, would, in the course of ages, become a disaster-producer in cosmos. But from star to star-fish, everything obeys law—except Man, and he has to obey, willy nilly, certain laws he cannot defy. In his attempts to emulate Deity, Man has formulated laws for his own welfare, but unlike Deity, he cannot maintain strict conformity to them, either on his own part or that of his fellow-men.

30 As the Great Geometrician, God is comprehended somewhat in his creative aspect as the Great Architect, and Masonic symbolism employs the factors in architecture to a marked degree. Architectural features are ready and excellent exemplars of specific spiritual and esoteric truths, and it is vastly easier for some minds to gain a serious and proper concept of Deity when contemplating Him as a Builder, rather than as a Father or a Supreme Judge. Nevertheless, we must remember that in the Craft, names are sometimes employed to *conceal* as well as to reveal. The title of Great Geometrician, we understand to be merely the veil which conceals the secret, sacred and unpronounceable Name of Our Creator, not merely the Yod, He, Vau, He of the Hebrews, the AUM of the Easterns, or any of the fancifully mystical cognomens common to arcane students.

31 The secret, sacred name of God is *unpronounceable*, therefore it is also *unprintable*. It may be neither spoken nor written for it is not a word in the ordinary lexicographical sense. The real name of God is a *vibration*. It may be felt or sensed by those whose lives are sufficiently upon a spiritual plane. It can be apprehended by those in ordinary planes of consciousness if they are able to respond to the power of art and beauty in Nature, as she expresses thru the Four Elements in their uncontrold and native status.

32 We gain some idea of what the name of God really is by referring to a previous lesson in this series (No. 4), wherein we discuss the meaning of the Lost or Master's Word. By contemplating God as we best can understand Him thru His creative aspects, we shall place ourselves in a proper position to receive the unpronounceable but at least somewhat communicable

Name which will prove potent to raise us to a higher plane of consciousness thru a higher ability to appreciate.

33 The All-Seeing Eye and the title of the Great Geometrician are, in themselves, sufficient leverage to raise the neofite to a higher level of conscious perception of the Divine Order of Nature and his individual place as a Co-Builder with Deity. Many a man has been lifted from the "slough of despond" by the sight of physical beauty in his environment, or the contemplation of the wonders of creation about him. Many have been "lifted up" to a status of true spiritual exaltation by the inward contemplation of the wonders of conscious existence thru the genius of a Deity who can be *apprehended* but not *comprehended*. The All-Seeing Eye within each of us will show us glimpses into the supernal planes if we "live the life" requisite for such advance visions. The name of the Great Geometrician will work its marvelous harmonic effect into the ruffled vibrations of the human soul, if we permit it to do so thru serious meditation and contemplation; not thru curiosity but thru desire for still further Light.

34 The moment a man is permitted to enter Freemasonry even upon the Entered Apprentice degree, he has been raised above the level of those of his associates not of the Fraternity. This is not to be interpreted as any concept of snobbish exclusiveness for Freemasonry is far from anything of the sort. It would be against its fundamental principles of universalism. But the man who becomes an Entered Apprentice and then proceeds onward, takes upon himself responsibilities and duties to his fellow Masons and to all mankind as well, that his non-Masonic associates have not assumed. Therefore, of him who *assumes* much, shall much be *expected* and from his assumedly higher level of admitted and profest personal responsibility, the world will demand a contact that will permit a realization by others of the spiritual power he should, normally, develop thru living a life based upon and guided by active principles of conduct.

35 All thru the symbolic degrees of Freemasonry, the Candidate rises by his own energy, under guidance. He ascends the stairway to the Middle Chamber and comes to the place where he expects to be acknowledged a true Master Mason. But there comes a time when he can no longer raise himself and has to acknowledge the need of an active operative power higher than himself to raise him from an humble and lowly status to erect, conscious Manhood on the plane of Mastership.

36 In this symbolism, Freemasonry does but follow the plan of human life again. Step by step man raises himself, it may be from obscurity, or it may be from mediocrity to success. But, no matter how active and vigorous a man may be, there comes a time in every man's life when he is laid low by the forces against which he has struggled. We doubt if there is a man living who has not, at some time or other, not felt the need of the assistance of his fellow men in rising out of a critical situation. It seems to be a law of Nature that it shall be so.

37 We seldom rise thru our pleasures. We rise in life thru the experience that is born of suffering in some special way or of some special kind. We meet ruffians at every angle, not always in the hoofs and horns of Mephistopheles but more often in the evening clothes of assumedly polite society. Still more often the ruffians with whom one is called upon to contend the hardest and defend his integrity to the greatest extent, are ruffians the world does not see but whom we feel and sense within ourselves, for just as we are taught by the sages to seek the highest treasure within ourselves, so also, must we watch out for the lowest influences, for good and evil dwell together in this strangely complex creature, Man.

38 If it seems strange that good and evil are so closely associated, let us remember that the so-called Devil was, traditionally, an archangel in good standing, a Light-Bearer in the kingdom, who, thru pride and ambition, fell from his lofty estate and thereafter devoted himself to warfare against his erstwhile Sovereign. According to Tradition, but not by any means according to orthodox theology (which, thankfully, is quite fallible), the Devil is, aeons hence, to be transmuted thru his own efforts, back to his pristine status and restored to his rank amongst the celestial hierarchy.

39 Of course, this is merely Tradition, but, strangely enuf, it would be quite logical if it should prove to hold a cosmic truth already recognized by many students. For evil stirs up the forces of repulsion to such an extent that, sooner or later, they exterminate their source of origin and then the forces of attraction, light and constructivity, restore the original equilibrium.

40 This restoration of equilibrium is the reason for pain. It shows us the error of indulgence and becomes a penalty therefor, until repeld by the unpleasant effects we mistakenly thought would or might be pleasure, we turn upon the error or mistake itself and seek to rectify it or to destroy it by proper restitution of some sort. This is the esoteric truth of the saying in the Great Light that, "the wages of sin is death"—meaning, of course, the death of the sin itself, for we well know that every one who "sins" does not necessarily die therefor.

41 In the human Temple, there are Three Gates thru which the Real Self contacts the world and personalities external to himself. As in all mythology, yet quite truly so, Gates are guarded by both angels and demons. In the body, the demons or ruffians are, in the Head or East, Sense Illusion. In the West or lower part of the Temple, Lust. In the South, symbolically the heart, Desire. Illusion, Lust, Desire! Each has in it the elements of its companions, yet each is a separate entity in, by and of itself, capable of working much harm to the sensitive soul who may fall into its power.

42 A man may successfully pass one, perhaps the second of these bodily ruffians and come thru victoriously, but by the time he meets the third, he is so exhausted by the repeated assaults that he must succumb. Here, at last, he can no longer rise unaided, simply because his journey on physical planes is completed and he cannot rise to an higher plane of consciousness until and unless he is assisted by some one who has already attained to it.

43 In this fact, that none can help him in his direst extremity except one who has gone this way before him, he receives another impressive lesson, namely, that he has a special duty to all who may also be below him in life's stations. There is never a time in the entire cycle of consciousness with any individual human being, when there are not those who are above him as well as below him. Haughty as he may feel, there are still those who are superior in exaltation to him. Humble as he may feel, there are always those who are still beneath him. This is the law in Nature's School for always there are classes entering for life's day at school and classes graduating over those who are entering.

44 In the spiritual kingdom, the same law is operative, for those who have gone there long, long ago, now constitute the various celestial grades or hierarchies and are appointed specific duties in assisting to guide the evolutionary process of other human life waves now on their way to expression. The Master Mason may "take the higher degrees", so-called, in York and Scottish Rites, but in no other body will he experience a situation that will make a more important or lasting impress upon him than in the Symbolic Lodge. All that Masonry really is, aside from fanciful tradition and the tradition of the building of a material Temple that is not at all in alignment with historic and archaeologic facts, will be found in the magnificent ethical principles inculcated in the Three Symbolic Degrees. We may touch upon the "higher degrees" in other lessons, but none of them are really higher except in numerical sequence only.

45 The Galilean Master once said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." He has done so to a marvelous degree. Perhaps it is this ceremonial raising strest in Freemasonry, that serves as an operative principle to draw or to attract so many millions of intelligent men in the more progressive races and nations to its ranks of membership. The steel magnet raises the steel bar it attracts. That which attracts is a magnet, whether it be of steel or of flesh and blood. That which attracts, if it operates constructively, raises that which it attracts.

46 The purpose of being raised, symbolically and in fact, is that the Master Mason may *travel in foreign countries*. Let each understand this as he will, for concepts of the "foreign countries" vary according to traditional denominational heritages. Freemasonry however, is not concerned, as an institution, with denominationalism, altho its individual members are not at

all free from such affiliations and their consequent influence upon the individual mentalism.

47 However, the true Mason gets something of value even in the ordinary understanding of this phrase, "traveling in foreign countries." The Mason who has attained to any real and genuine initiation will understand that no geographical countries are alluded to, but the planes of consciousness that are foreign, i.e., external, to the normal planes of physical environment.

48 The true initiate is he who learns how to so control his physical vehicle and its properties, that, instead of being in subjection to it, he is superior to it and can leave it consciously at will. Then indeed he *can* travel in foreign countries, upon planes of consciousness and in states of being *external* to his normal environment and *internal* in relation to his spiritual consciousness. The planes of experience open to the real Master Mason are the Astral and the lower sub-divisions of the Plane of Thought, which is above the Astral region. These are, indeed "foreign countries" to the uninitiated, but to the initiate, they are sources of inspiration and revelation in his service to his fellow beings.

49 Traveling in foreign countries is not a magical process. It is a normal procedure to whoso has properly prepared and developed himself. It is simply a matter of the conscious and voluntary dissociation of the Ego, clothed in the Mind Stuff to which it is accustomed, from the physical body, and functioning with the Astral Body on Astral planes of being and consciousness. The Master Mason who can thus travel is entitled to and does receive Master's wages, which are not paid in any currency of the physical world but in the pabulum of the inner worlds.

50 Some men, uninitiates, will say, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? The dead are raised by those who have themselves been brot to Light, for death is darkness and Life is Light. They come to Light with the body they have prepared for it. Not the body of weakness and worldly desire in which they have formerly functioned, but the new body of strength they have developed as a result of their initiatory career and the lessons they have learned. It is not the seed that blossoms. Long before the blossom appears the original seed body has decayed. It is not the physical body that Freemasonry teaches shall be raised, but a spiritual body the Mason gradually has been developing.

51 Until a Mason has been raised, his path for the most part, has been that of darkness. He has had to grope blindly, partly with guidance, ultimately alone. But until he has been truly raised, and able to travel in foreign countries, he is not a Master in the full sense of the word, regardless of the titles and decorations he may subsequently wear. The real Master must be able to prove that he has been raised, not alone physically, but psychologically and spiritually. He must prove that he knows by personal experience what it means to travel in foreign lands without a personal guide and to collect master's wages and prove his possession of them.

52 To the one who has applied himself to learn all that raising in his earthly Lodge implies, the raising into the Celestial Lodge will not come as a difficult matter. He will look forward to that event as a crowning triumph in his initiatory career, for all life is a process of initiation and a continual raising, in evolutionary status, in mental, intellectual and, whether we realize it or not, in spiritual status, too. It is the law of Life that progress shall consist in being raised ourselves and in raising others in our turn. Progress is stepping upward, looking upward, thinking upward, and finally,—release—upward.
